

Greetings Janna

My name is Jim Hawthorne and for the past 20 years I have been serving as the Executive Director of Yellowstone Alliance Adventures, a youth camp and retreat center south of Bozeman, MT.

The timing of this bill falls right in with conversations that I have personally been having with our own CPA as we are trying to discern how to continue to afford the bringing on our own seasonal counseling and support staff without having the cost of camp become unaffordable for the majority of Montana children and families.

The uniqueness of camp work revolves around people who, if they could ultimately afford it, would choose to volunteer their summers to come along side of campers for the following reasons: 1) To have the opportunity to give back, serve and invest in others. 2) To have the personal opportunity to develop as a leader and be given the opportunity to try new things, develop new skills, live in an intentional community, and grow in responsibility and maturity.

Just as it is difficult, in this unique industry that has a 24/7 expectation, to assess the exact amount of time on duty and determine an exact value of financial compensation, it is equally illusive to place a value on the personal investment that is made into each person that is allowed the privilege of working at a summer camp. While the majority of my staff are college students and are concerned about making some money over their summers, each of them would let you know that they get more out of their experience on our staff than if they were doing any other job at home for just a pay check.

Thanks you for considering this important addition to the bill SB 270. I ask that you will vote favorably to support this bill and in doing so act on behalf of these industries that have a highly significant and positive impact on all of our communities throughout the state.

Jim Hawthorne

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